

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 7639

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, VS

SUBJECT: LOS: BIOGRAPHIC SUPPORT: GVN DELEGATION

REFS: A) STATE 67788; B) SAIGON 5517

1. MFA HAS JUST INFORMED US OF THE FINAL SELECTION OF THEIR LOS DELEGATION. FOLLOWING BIOGRAPHIC INFO SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO REF (A), SUPPLEMENTING REF (B).

2. HEAD OF DELEGATION: VUONG VAN BAC, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. A FULL BIOGRAPHIC REPORT SUBMITTED UNDER SAIGON A-269 OF NOVEMBER 23, 1973 REMAINS VALID. DURING THE 10 DAYS OR SO THAT MINISTER BAC REMAINS AT CARACAS THE GVNDL WILL PROBABLY HAVE A RELATIVELY HIGH DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE, THROUGH THIS IS EXPECTED TO DECLINE WITH HIS RETURN TO SAIGON. THE MINISTER'S ENGLISH AND FRENCH ARE EXCELLENT AND HIS SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF LOS MATTERS IS HIGH. HE IS A VERY COMPETENT LAWYER, AND HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN READING INTO LOS ISSUES QUITE CAREFULLY. WE EXPECT THAT MINISTER BAC WILL TURN IN AN ABLE PERFORMANCE.

3. THE QUESTION OF WHO WILL BE ACTING HEAD OF THE DELEGATION IN THE FM'S ABSENCE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SOME DEBATE WITHIN THE MINISTRY, AND WE HAVE JUST BEEN TOLD THAT AMBASSADOR NGUYEN HUU CHI (GVN OBSERVER AT THE UN) WILL HAVE THE JOB FOR THE FIRST 5 WEEKS AND AMBASSADOR LE VAN LOI (GVN OBSERVER IN GENEVA) WILL TAKE OVER THIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECOND 5

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WEEKS.

4. AMBASSADOR CHI, WHO HAS HEADED THE GVN'S OBSERVER MISSION AT THE UN SINCE 1967, IS A CAREER DIPLOMAT WHO HAS HELD PREVIOUS POSITIONS AS DIRECTOR OF VABINET WITHIN THE MINISTRY, AND ALSO REPRESENTED THE GVN AT THE NEW YORK PREPARATORY CONFERENCE ON LAW OF SEA IN DECEMBER. CHI, WHO HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS COMPETENT AND PLEASANT, HAS LIMITED PERSONAL INFLUENCE ON GVN POLICY-MAKING AND IS NEITHER DYNAMIC NOR OUTGOING. HE HAS EXCELLENT FRENCH AND LIMITED ENGLISH. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF LOS MATTERS.

5. AMBASSADOR LE VAN LOI HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS ENERGETIC, PERSONABLE, AND IMAGINATIVE AND HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE A SEASONED AND CAPABLE DIPLOMAT. HE HAS HAD PRIOR SERVICE IN LONDON, TUNIS AND ROME, AND TOURS IN SAIGON AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF PRESS AFFAIRS AND US/UN AFFAIRS. HIS PERFORMANCE IN THE RECENT FIGHT TO DENY AN INVITATION TO THE "PRG" TO ATTEND THE LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA WAS DESCRIBED BY THE USMISSION AS "STELLAR: HE DIRECTED HIS STAFF IN AN ENERGETIC AND EFFECTIVE CORRIDOR CAMPAIGN", AND DELIVERED A SPEECH ON THE SUBJECT WHICH WAS DESCRIBED AS DIGNIFIED, CALM, SENSIBLE AND "SURELY THE MOST MOVING (ADDRESS) ON THE SUBJECT." THERE WILL BE FEW IF ANY GVN DELEGATES WITH GREATER DEMONSTRATED "EFFECTIVENESS IN CONFERENCES" THAN LOI, AND HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO FOCUS HIS PRIMARY ATTENTION, AT LEAST IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE CONFERENCE, TOWARD DEFEATING ANY EFFORTS EITHER TO CHALLENGE THE CREDENTIALS OF HIS OWN DELEGATION OR TO EXTEND AN INVITATION TO THE SO-CALLED "PRG". HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

6. PROFESSOR NGUYEN QUOC DINH WAS BORN IN NORTH VIETNAM IN 1916. HE SERVED BRIEFLY AS MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN 1954, AND SINCE 1964 HAS BEEN GVN PERMREP TO UNESCO IN PARIS, WHERE HE HAS ALSO WORKED PART-TIME AS A PROFESSOR OF LAW. HE SERVED AS CHIEF OF THE GVN DELEGATION TO THE 1958 GENEVA CONFERENCE ON MARITIME LAW, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THEIR DELEGATION TO THE GENEVA MARTIME LAW CONFERENCE IN 1960, AND HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY ON QUESTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. HE PROBABLY BRINGS TO THE LOS CONFERENCE A GREATER FUND OF SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT THAN ANY OTHER GVN DELEGATE, AND FOR PROTOCOL PURPOSES, WILL BE LISTED AS DELEGATION "EXPERT". HIS FRENCH IS VIRTUALLY NATIVE, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY IS UNKNOWN.

7. THE FOLLOWING THREE PERSONS WILL BE LISTED AS DELEGATION "MEMBERS": MISS NGUYEN THI NGOC LAN WAS BORN IN NORTH VIETNAM IN 1933, AND IS WELL KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY AS A VERY PROFESSIONAL AND KNOWLEDGEABLE MIDDLE GRADE GVN DIPLOMAT. MISS LAN RECEIVED HER MA IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FROM THE INIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA AND HAS HAD ONE TOUR AT THE GVN EMBASSY IN BONN. SHE IS CURRENTLY

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES AT MFA AND HAS ATTENDED VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, INCLUDING THE RECENT LOS PREPARATORY CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK, AND THE GROUP OF 77 MEETING IN NAIROBI. HER SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF MARITIME LAW IS CERTAINLY THE MOST EXTENSIVE OF ANYONE PRESENTLY SERVING AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. EMBASSY OFFICERS IN FEQUENT CONTACT WITH MISS LAN ON QUESTIONS AS FICERSE AS THE ATOMIC ENERGY AGREEMENT AND THE LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE HAVE FOUND HER CHARMING, KNOWLEDGEABLE, FRIENDLY AND VERY COMPETENT, IF SOMETIMES CAUTIOUS. SHE ACTED AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE GVN SIDE IN THE RECENT TDY VISIT OF LOS EXPERTS OXMAN AND AKE, #AND PEROFRMED THIS ROLE WITH HER USUAL PROFESSIONALISM AND CHARM. SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH AND FRENCH FLUENTLY.

8. TRAN VAN KHOI IS ONE OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S YOUNG, ARTICULATE US-EDUCATED TECHNOCRATS; BORN IN 1942 IN THUA THIEN PROVINCE, HE RECEIVED HIS SECONDARY EDUCATION IN VIETNAM (CHU VAN AN HIGH SCHOOL) AND A DEGREE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA AT TUCSON. FROM 1964-66, HE WORKED AT THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER, FROM 1966-69 IN THE INVESTMENT SECTION OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, FROM 1969-71 AS HEAD OF THE INVESTMENT SERVICE IN THE SAME MINISTRY. SINCE 1971, KHOI HAS BEEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PERROLEUM BOARD WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY. AS SUCH, HE HAS BEEN PRINCIPAL GVN NEGOTIATOR IN DEALING WITH FOREIGN OIL FIEMS ON GRANTING OF OFFSHORE OIL CONCESSIONS, AND IS PARTICULARLY WELL INFORMED ON MARINE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, FISHERIES COASTAL AND DEEP SEA BED RESOURCES, AND MARINE POLLUTION ISSUES. HIS ENGLISH IS EXCELLENT, AND HE HAS ADEQUATE FRENCH.

9. CDR BUI DUC TRONG IS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH IN THE NAVY DEPARTMENT WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT HIS BACKGROUND OR EARLY LIFE.
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FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS HE HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN DERENSE-RELATED COASTAL RESEARCH WORK AND APPARENTLY WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE "MARKET TIME" PATROL EFFORT TO INTERDICT VN/NVA SEABORNE SUPPLY ROUTES. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED TO EMBASSY OFFICERS A PARTICULAR CONCERN WITH COASTAL DEFENSE IMPLICATIONS OF PROJECTED AGREEMENTS ON THE BREADTH OF THE TERRITORIAL SEA AND RIGHTS OF UNIMPEDED TRANSIT. CDR TRONG IS A PLEASANT AND OUTGOING INDIVIDUAL; HE IS SOMEWHAT HAMPERED BY HIS LIMITED ENGLISH, THOUGH HIS FRENCH IS BETTER. HIS INFLUENCE WITHIN THE DELEGATION WILL PROBABLY BE SLIGHT.
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